

Name _____

Persuasive letter
Sass/Scow EGE
Semester 2

After looking at your subject through both an academic lens (your scholarly research) and a literary lens (the ode by Pablo Neruda), it’s time to tie those views together and do some persuasive writing.

Role: You as an expert on your topic
Audience: Mr. Lee Peters, principal of Legacy High School
Format: A friendly letter of persuasion
Topic: Convince Mr. Peters to create a day during the school year to honor and celebrate your research subject. It is up to you how you’d like for your subject to be honored, so be thoughtful and creative

Possible objections Mr. Peters might have about honoring your subject	Possible objections other people in our school community (parents, business owners, teachers, other students, etc.) might have about honoring your subject

What would be an appropriate celebration to honor your subject? An all-school assembly? A holiday? A declaration that everyone wear a certain color? Brainstorm several possibilities here:

What would be a good date for this celebration? Why?

Logical Appeals = valid reasons + EVIDENCE (academic research—facts, statistics, examples, expert opinion)	Emotional Appeals = appeals to help your reader become personally involved in the argument by appealing to her or his feelings: Physiological needs such as food, drink, and shelter Psychological needs such as the need to be loved or be attractive, accepted, or successful Emotions such as love, hate, guilt, loyalty, pride, self-esteem, patriotism, etc.

Form an opinion statement: After reviewing the information above, write one sentence that expresses an opinion about the topic. You may need to write several versions of this statement before it says exactly what you want it to say. Use the following formula:

A specific topic + your feeling about it = an effective claim

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Introduction

Introductions have one primary purpose: You must convince Mr. Peters that your topic is important enough to have some sort of celebration or recognition by the whole school and that your letter deserves his attention. This is best done by using an interesting hook to get your reader's attention. Use a quotation, an anecdote, vivid imagery, or a startling fact or statistic. Give a bit of background information about your topic, and then finish with a **claim** (your thesis statement) that states the main idea of your letter and clearly expresses your opinion.

A thesis statement that is the last sentence of your introductory paragraph—this tells your reader what to expect and is your **claim**. It is a restricted, precisely worded declarative sentence that states the purpose of your letter—the point you are making.

Body—Evidence to prove your claim

Your persuasive letter should include three body paragraphs that will introduce your reader to evidence that is directly connected to your topic (see above). Make sure you use logical appeals and emotional appeals.

Start each body paragraph with a topic sentence. Each paragraph should give the reader a different reason to agree with your position. Provide evidence to support your opinions: facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, direct quotes, and expert opinions.

Note: One of your body paragraphs (you need to make a decision about where this paragraph best fits) should address objections someone might make towards your opinion. Tell the reader why their possible objection will not be a problem. For example: *Some people say [possible objection], but the fact is [your response to the objection].* ***Some people say that nuclear energy is dangerous, but statistics show that it is actually very safe.***

Make sure to provide legitimate reasons for your case. People like to hear the reasoning behind suggestions and the more reasons you can provide, the better chance you will have at swaying your reader's opinion. However, you need to make sure that they are legitimate reasons that are relevant to the topic of your letter.

Organize the details you have gathered by using a combination of the following approaches:

LOGIC: Consider the following approaches:

Analogy - a situation familiar to the reader is compared with one the writer wants to focus on (example: we celebrate and recognize MLK, Jr.'s birthday and the birthdays of Presidents Washington and Lincoln with a national holiday— isn't your research subject as important?)

Cause-and-effect relationships - one event is proven to be the cause of another

Facts, example, and illustrations - used to support or explain a given situation or idea

Judgments or opinions - used to support ideas that cannot be proven

CREDIBILITY: You can achieve credibility by:

Avoiding illogical thinking

Using only subtle emotional appeal

Showing a clear understanding of the topic

You also need to consider whether you will present your points in order of most important to least important or least important to most important.

When deciding, consider these questions:

What benefit will result from my reader considering my most powerful argument first? Last?

What negative effect might result?

How can I best get and keep the attention of my reader?

While introductions and conclusions sometimes start or finish with quotations for effect, **do not begin or end a body paragraph with a quotation**. A body paragraph must begin with a topic sentence that makes a claim before providing context, the quoted text, and commentary.

When using quotations as evidence, remember “CCQC”:
Claim, Context, Quotation, Commentary

Make sure that before or after each quote that you point out how it connects to the claim (thesis statement). Do this with variety and finesse rather than mentioning the word “thesis” or writing, “This proves my point.”)

Conclusion

The conclusion of a persuasive letter has two purposes: First, you must prove to your reader that you have considered the perspective of people who are likely to disagree with you. Start by mentioning the biggest concern that an opponent is likely to have and then either (a) showing why this concern is flawed or (b) explaining why your research subject should be celebrated despite that concern. Finally, your conclusion must be motivating and memorable. Appealing to a sense of right and wrong, describing the positive outcomes of celebrating your subject, and/or the negative outcomes of a refusal to act are all strategies that can leave your reader inspired to take action.

Make sure your conclusion restates your claim (thesis statement) in different words. Do not introduce a new topic in your conclusion. End with a call to action to request the reader’s help with what you want to do.

Conclude with “your way” being the “only way” to see things. At the end of your persuasive letter, it’s important to represent your view as the best way of seeing the situation and leave no room for doubt. This will leave your reader with a strong sense of urgency to share your opinion.

Notes: